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Mr Richard Gasser
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Gasser

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Park Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 7 December 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2017. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, a member of the governing body and senior leaders. I made short visits to lessons with you to determine the quality of pupils' work and to talk to pupils, teachers and teaching assistants. I also scrutinised records relating to pupils' outcomes and I evaluated the school's action plans.

Context

Since the previous inspection, you have changed the leadership structure of the school. You have brought the teachers with responsibility for mathematics and English into the leadership team and changed the role of the leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. In September 2017, four new teachers started work at the school.

Main findings

The changes you have made to the leadership of the school have raised expectations and had a positive effect on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Senior leaders communicate their plans effectively and so teachers have a clear idea of what is expected of them. As a result, teaching is now more consistent.

You have reorganised the arrangements for performance management. You have introduced rigorous systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and so teachers are held to account for pupils' progress in each year group. Senior leaders have a clear view of the quality of teaching in the school and, consequently, they are able to evaluate the impact of their actions.

Senior leaders have refined the assessments that teachers make about pupils so that a rounded picture of each pupil's achievement is formed. Teachers use these assessments well to plan their teaching collaboratively. Work is provided at the right level of difficulty for pupils. For example, in mathematics, well-chosen problem-solving tasks cause the most able pupils to think carefully, while at the same time the least able pupils are supported well.

Pupils enjoy reading. Teachers encourage pupils to read by developing reading areas in classrooms to fire pupils' imaginations. However, these are not in place in all rooms. Teachers' knowledge of literature has been developed by high-quality training. A wider range of texts is in use in English lessons. As a result of this and other initiatives to promote reading, pupils' vocabulary has been expanded.

Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have developed a whole-school strategy for teaching writing. Teachers understand this strategy and the part they play in it. Senior leaders have provided training for teachers, which has led to greater consistency in teaching writing across classes in each year and across year groups. The quality of pupils' handwriting is improving because of a concerted effort by staff. However, some pupils' handwriting skills remain weak. Pupils' use of punctuation and grammar has improved because they are given more opportunities to write at length in subjects other than English and so to practise their skills. Senior leaders recognise that the quality of some pupils' spelling has not improved enough.

Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported effectively by staff. Teaching assistants are adept at giving pupils help but know when to step back and allow pupils time to work through challenges by themselves. The school has a clear plan for developing the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, progress with implementing some of the actions in this plan has been slow.

The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is improving because teachers' expectations of them have been raised. The school has stepped up its

work with parents to communicate what the school does and how parents can help their children to succeed. Stronger relationships with parents have resulted.

The chair of governors was appointed to the role before the previous inspection. He instigated a review of governance at that time and acted on its recommendations. Consequently, governance has been strengthened. For example, a newly recruited governor has brought useful skills and experience. The governing body provides effective challenge and support to senior leaders.

External support

You, your leaders and teachers have taken regular opportunities to visit other schools to observe effective practice. This has given staff renewed energy and focus to improve aspects of the school's work, in particular the teaching of writing.

The local authority monitors the school closely. It offers very helpful support and challenge to leaders. Through its regular project group meetings and reviews of the school's effectiveness, the local authority has an accurate understanding of the improvements that have taken place across the school.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Gloucestershire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector